DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 101 509 88 EC 071 227

TITLE	Model for Children's Learning Centers. Second Year Report.
INSTITUTION	Affton School District, St. Louis, Mo.
SPONS AGENCY	Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education (DHEW/OE), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	31 Jul 73
NOTE	19p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Achievement; Exceptional Child Education; *Identification; *Learning Disabilities; *Program Evaluation; Regular Class Placement; Remedial Instruction; *Resource Centers; School Districts
IDENTIFIERS	Elementary Secondary Education Act Title III; ESEA Title III

ABSTRACT

Presented is the second year (1972-73) report of the Affton School District's (Saint Louis, Missouri) program (funded under Title III) to provide diagnostic studies of elementary grade learning disabled (LD) children, learning centers in four elementary schools for LD children, and adequate programing to allow LD children to be returned to the regular classroom within one academic year. Described are the testing procedure and the project design. Evaluation showed that 176 children were given the diagnostic battery, that the 136 children who were enrolled in the Learning Centers improved in academic areas such as visual motor integration and reading comprehension, and that 40 percent of the enrolled children were returned to the regular class by the end of the academic year. (DB)

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED101509

MODEL FOR CHILDREN'S LEARNING CENTERS

Second Year Report

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF AFFTON
8701 MACKENZIE ROAD
SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI 63123

July 31, 1973

Elementary and Secondary Education Act
Title III
P. L. 98-10

RECEIVED
AUG 13 1973
TITLE III, ESEA

INTRODUCTION

In April, 1970 contact was made between the School District of Affton, Saint Louis County, Missouri and Saint Louis University, Department of Communication Disorders to discuss a possible pilot project to explore the many facets of learning disabilities; but in particular the role of perceptual disabilities in the limited academic functioning of elementary aged school children. National interest in the perceptually handicapped, the minimally brain damaged, or the child described as having psycho-neurological learning problems had brought requests for such programming from parents, teachers, and other concerned individuals. It was determined that a pilot project be undertaken to provide direction for work in this area within the Affton School District.

The one year pilot project was conducted at the Mesnier School, with the Perceptual Laboratory, as the center was called, being staffed by a Graduate Fellow from the Department of Communication Disorders of Saint Louis University, under the supervision of a faculty member of that Department and under the careful supervision of the principal of Mesnier School and the Superintendent of the Affton School District.

In the Fall of 1970, the Affton School District began consideration of an extension of the Learning program to all elementary schools. Contacts were made with other public and parochial school districts as well as the Special School District of Saint Louis County, Missouri and other interested individuals; resulting in the submission of a grant application for funding of the project under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title III, P. L. 89-10.

The United States Office of Education defines a learning disability as

> "... one or more significant deficits in essential learning processes requiring special education techniques for remediation. Children with a learning disability generally demonstrate a discrepancy between expected and actual achievement, in one or more areas such as spoken, read or written language, mathematics and spatial orientation. Such disabilities are not primarily the result of sensory, motor, intellectual, or emotional handicap or lack of opportunity to learn."

Despite this definition there appeared to be much subjectivity and opinion concerning the nature of deficiencies in learning. Although definition remains difficult, operationally it was necessary to view learning disabled children as having an interference in the learning pattern that was not manifested by gross neurological signs but that resulted in severe disabilities in learning and in some cases related adjustment difficulties and in the actualization of what might be even high intellectual potential. This is the population that is unable to normally understand, speak, read, write, tell time, play, calculate, distinguish right from left, or relate well with others, although they are not mentally retarded, have no sensory impairments, have no primary behavioral disorders, and do not present problems mainly in motor functioning. They have integrity and competence in general but have difficulty profiting in a normal way from experience; they have a difference or perhaps a deficiency in learning ability, but not an incapacity to learn. It was toward the continuing need for better definition of learning disabilities, toward improved evaluation and educational management, that the reported project was directed. The present study is concerned especially with the effects of specialized teaching programs (Learning Center class placement) upon elementary school children identified as evidencing one or more areas of learning deficit.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

Identification and evaluation of children with learning disabilities has been difficult by virtue of the complex procedures involved. However, it is more difficult to provide adequate educational placement for these children; placements that will continue regular classroom exposure, provide for continued social and emotional growth, guard the child from isolation from his peers or effect negatively peer relationships, provide for re-entering to regular classroom activities in a structured fashion, and in general to maintain academic unification for the student.

The objectives of the present project were to design criteria for adequate identification of the learning involved child and to establish adequate habilitative programming for him. More inclusively, the basic objectives of this project can be summarized as follows:

1. To provide an intensive diagnostic study of children referred to the Learning Centers for Learning Difficulties.
2. To provide a Learning Center in each of the four Elementary Schools for elementary school children who evidence atypical learning patterns whereby affording these children the opportunity to significantly improve their level of performance.
3. To provide adequate programming for children identified as learning disabled to enable them to be returned to their regular classroom in one or more academic subjects within one academic year.

PROGRAM DESIGN

Referral of children to the Learning Centers was accomplished during the second year of the project by teacher referral, counselor referral or principal referral. Children referred were then observed in the classroom situation by the Project Coordinator as a part of gaining adequate intake information. In

addition conferences were held with the child's classroom teacher, with the school counselor, and with other school personnel having needed background data on the child. Following background data collection and observation, the student was seen by the Learning Center staff for a diagnostic workup. The following tests were used in the evaluation battery according to areas of deficit reported and need of information with regard to adequate evaluation of learning profile and data need for adequate Learning Center programming.

1. Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (receptive vocabulary ability).
2. Myklebust Picture Story Language Test (written language skills).
3. Slingerland Test for Identifying Children with Specific Language Disabilities.
4. Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test.
5. Test of Visual-Motor Integration (Berry).
6. Stanford Diagnostic Arithmetic Test.
7. Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities.
8. Oseretsky Motor Proficiency Scale.
9. Frostig Test of Visual Perceptual Development.

Post-testing of each child enrolled in the Learning Center was undertaken at the time of the child's termination from attendance in the Learning Center or at the end of the school year. Resultant pre- and post-program data was thus compiled on each child for purposes of evaluation of project effect.

In addition to the evaluation of children enrolled in the Learning Center, initial test batteries were administered to children referred to the Center but not enrolled due to the absence of an actual learning disability or the identification or suspicion of some other educational interference (mental retardation, emotional disturbance, etc.). In these cases referral to the proper school personnel, conference with the classroom teacher, or both and conveying of test results to the school principal occurred.

A total of 136 children were enrolled in the four Affton Learning Centers during the 1972-73 academic year. Additional children were enrolled in the summer program which was completed on July 27, 1973. Because of the dates of the summer school program, data from it could not be included in this report. Table I presents the summary of enrollment per grade for the second project year.

TABLE I

AFFTON LEARNING CENTER ENROLLMENT BY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
1972-73 EXCLUDING SUMMER SESSION

Grade	N	Percentage of Elementary Aged School Children Enrolled
1	7	
2	28	
3	26	
4	28	
5	31	
6	16	
TOTAL	136	8.47

EVALUATION OF PROJECT BY OBJECTIVE

The tests used in this project yielded either IQ scores, scaled scores, grade scores, raw scores, or age scores. For purposes of this study, raw scores were used in the primary statistical analysis. Mental age and other age units were selected as most adequate in measuring the child's level of development in relation to persons of corresponding chronological age. Grade scores were selected for measuring a child's level of development in relation to persons in corresponding grades.

Objective I

During the 1972-73 school year the Affton School District will provide an intensive diagnostic study of 200 children referred to the Learning Centers for learning difficulties. This program will identify the deficits and assets of each child evaluated and provide the impetus for placement in the Learning Center if necessary.

During the 1972-73 school year the Learning Centers administered learning disability evaluation batteries to 176 children. Table II identifies these children by grade and school attended. (See Table II, p. 7).

The Affton Learning Centers administered a total of seventy pre-programming diagnostic batteries. This number is significantly below that number estimated in Objective I when the Objective is interpreted to infer pre-program testing. Since the project was in its second year of operation, and a number of children were being continued in the Learning Centers from the first year of programming, it did not seem feasible or appropriate to the Project staff to evaluate, utilizing complete diagnostic batteries, children for whom enrollment in the Learning Center could not be provided within a reasonable period of time. As a result children were evaluated when openings within the Learning Centers were forseeable, thus restricting the total number of pre-program evaluations undertaken. When data is considered in terms of completed evaluations, pre- and post-, a figure of 176 completed evaluations is forthcoming. This number approximates that figure projected in Objective I.

Objective II

Between July 1, 1972 and June 30, 1973 the Affton School District will provide a Learning Center in each of the four Elementary Schools for 280 elementary school children who evidence atypical learning patterns whereby affording these children the opportunity to significantly improve their level of performance, so that for each three months of enrollment in the Center

TABLE II

PRE- POST-PROGRAM EVALUATION BATTERIES
N=176

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Grade	K		1		2		3		4		5		6		7		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Goetsch	4	0	0	1	4	4	1	5	5	5	1	7	1	9	-	-	16	31
Hegge	6	0	2	1	0	4	2	4	0	3	0	3	0	0	-	-	10	15
Mesnier	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	11	6	5	3	4	1	2	-	-	13	23
Reavis	0	1	3	1	0	6	0	6	0	14	0	1	5	0	-	-	8	29
Parochial	0	0	9	0	5	1	5	0	3	3	0	2	1	0	0	2	23	8
Total	12	1	14	3	9	16	9	26	14	30	4	17	8	11	0	2	70	106

at least four months academic growth will be achieved.

Enrollment in the Learning Centers was accomplished for 136 children (excluding students attending summer session only). While this enrollment figure does not appear to meet the objective enrollment of 280 children, further analysis of enrollment data suggests enrollment above the projected 280 figure. Such interpretation is advanced because of the need of some children to be enrolled in the Learning Center for more than one subject area. Such multiple enrollment actually filled class placement, thus reducing individual child count. Table III gives enrollment in the Learning Center by number of remedial programs per subject area, and takes into account multiple enrollments per child. Utilizing enrollment figures on a per session basis a total enrollment equal to that of 309 children on a one subject per student need basis for enrollment is obtained.

TABLE III

LEARNING CENTER ENROLLMENT BY GRADE PER SUBJECT
(FOUR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS COMBINED)

Grade	Number of Children Enrolled for Reading	Number of Children Enrolled for Mathematics	Number of Children Enrolled for Writing/Spelling
1	7	Not tested	5
2	25	7	26
3	23	20	26
4	20	18	25
5	27	18	27
6	13	8	16
Total	108	81	120

Grand Total: 309 Sessions

Average number sessions per child enrolled: 2.27

In order to access the effects of Learning Center enrollment on children evidencing learning difficulties pre- and post-program enrollment test results were analyzed for all children enrolled in the Learning Center during the 1972-73 academic year. Pre-program test data was collected in either May of 1972 or September of 1973. Post-program data was collected in May of 1973. Only results of the current year's enrollment in the Learning Center were utilized for descriptive statistic purposes. Because of the relatively small Ns which would occur if data from each Learning Center were analyzed individually, data was compiled for total project by grade level. Tables IV through IX summarize Project findings.

TABLE IV

LORGE THORNDIKE INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENTS
FOR CHILDREN ENROLLED IN LEARNING CENTERS
PRE-PROGRAM SCORES

Grade	N	I.Q.
2	14	102
3	21	93
4	25	92
5	13	90
6	15	94

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TABLE V

PRE- POST- PROGRAM SCORES BY GRADE
CHILDREN ENROLLED IN LEARNING CENTERS
TEST OF VISUAL MOTOR INTEGRATION
PEABODY PICTURE VOCABULARY TEST

Grade	VMI Age Equivalent				PPVT Mental Age			
	N	Pre-	N	Post-	N	Pre-	N	Post-
2	15	5-6	12	7-8	15	7-8	16	8-9
3	16	7-2	21	8-1	23	8-4	26	9-4
4	21	6-6	26	9-1	21	9-8	27	10-7
5	10	8-8	7	8-2	14	10-2	14	10-8
6	14	9-8	9	10-1	16	11-1	16	12-8

TABLE VI

PRE- POST- PROGRAM SCORES BY GRADE
CHILDREN ENROLLED IN LEARNING CENTERS
GATES MACGINITIE READING TEST
(APPROPRIATE FORM ADMINISTERED BY GRADE PLACEMENT)

Grade	Vocabulary Grade Score				Comprehensive Grade Score			
	N	Pre-	N	Post-	N	Pre-	N	Post-
2	8	1.6	15	2.6	8	1.5	15	2.4
3	16	2.0	25	3.1	16	1.9	25	2.9
4	16	3.2	21	4.3	16	2.9	21	4.1
5	11	4.1	14	5.1	11	2.9	14	4.4
6	12	4.1	13	5.7	12	3.7	13	5.8

TABLE VII

PRE- POST- PROGRAM SCORES BY GRADES
CHILDREN ENROLLED IN LEARNING CENTERS
STANFORD DIAGNOSTIC ARITHMETIC TEST

Grade	Concepts Grade Score				Comprehension			
	N	Pre-	N	Post-	N	Pre-	N	Post-
2	-	-	2	2.4	-	-	2	2.7
3	8	2.7	19	3.0	8	2.1	19	3.0
4	7	3.2	14	4.7	7	3.6	14	4.0
5	5	4.3	8	5.8	5	3.7	8	5.0
6	6	5.5	6	6.1	6	4.5	6	5.0

TABLE VIII

PRE- POST- PROGRAM SCORES BY GRADE
MYKLEBUST PICTURE STORY LANGUAGE TEST
AGE EQUIVALENTS

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

	Total Words				Total Sentences				Syntax				Abstract-Concrete			
Grade	N	Pre-	N	Post	N	Pre-	N	Post-	N	Pre-	N	Post-	N	Pre-	N	Post-
2	10	7-2	15	7-6	10	7-2	15	8-6	11	8-2	15	8-6	11	7-0	15	7-2
3	19	7-5	25	8-1	17	7-2	25	8-3	18	9-4	25	9-7	18	8-2	25	8-7
4	14	7-9	22	8-8	14	7-4	22	8-5	14	8-9	22	9-4	14	7-1	22	8-8
5	13	7-6	15	9-6	13	7-4	15	9-7	13	9-5	15	9-6	13	9-8	15	10-4
6	9	9-9	16	9-4	9	11-2	16	9-4	9	10-6	16	10-4	9	10-4	16	10-3

TABLE IX

PRE- POST- PROGRAM SCORES BY GRADES
IOWA TESTS OF BASIC SKILLS
CHILDREN ENROLLED IN LEARNING CENTER COMPARED TO
1972 IOWA GRADE AVERAGES FOR DISTRICT

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Grade	Vocabulary N	Vocabulary Pre-	Vocabulary N	Vocabulary Post-	Reading N	Reading Pre-	Reading N	Reading Post-	Arithmetic Skills Concepts N	Arithmetic Skills Concepts Pre-	Arithmetic Skills Concepts N	Arithmetic Skills Concepts Post-	Composite N	Composite Pre-	Composite N	Composite Post-
4 Affton	281	4.9			281	4.7			281	4.8			281	4.8		
4 L.C.	18	3.2	30	3.6	18	3.0	30	3.3	18	3.0	30	3.7	18	3.0	28	3.5
5 Affton	307	5.9			307	5.9			307	6.0			307	6.0		
5 L.C.	11	3.6	15	4.6	11	3.9	15	4.6	11	3.6	15	5.1	11	3.8	15	4.8
6 Affton	309	6.8			309	6.9			309	7.2			309	7.0		
6 L.C.	15	4.5	17	5.4	15	4.5	17	5.4	15	4.9	17	6.0	15	4.7	17	5.5

RECEIVED
AUG 13 1973
TITLE III, ESEA

In keeping with Objective II, it was expected that children enrolled in the Learning Center would gain four months in academic skills for every three months enrolled in the program. Thus in a nine month academic year, a gain of twelve months academically was expected. This criteria was met in the following areas:

1. Visual-motor integration development - measured by the Berry test: children enrolled from Grade 4.
2. Receptive language development - measured by the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test: students enrolled from Grade 6.
3. Reading development, Vocabulary - measured by the Gates MacGinitie Reading Test: students enrolled from Grades 4 and 6.
4. Reading development, Comprehension - measured by the Gates MacGinitie Reading Test: students enrolled from Grades 5 and 6.
5. Mathematics development, Concepts - measured by the Stanford Diagnostic Arithmetic Test: students from Grades 4 and 5.
6. Mathematics development, Comprehension - measured by the Stanford Diagnostic Arithmetic Test: students enrolled from Grade 5.
7. Written language development, Total words produced - measured by the Myklebust Picture Story Language Test: students enrolled from Grade 5.
8. Written language development, Total sentences produced - measured by the Myklebust Picture Story Language Test: students enrolled from Grades 2 and 5.
9. Arithmetic development, Concepts - measured by the IOWA: students enrolled from Grade 5.

Test results suggest most gain made by children enrolled in the Learning Centers from regular fifth grade classrooms. In addition progress was indicated on a month per month basis in many areas tested, suggesting that

children identified as learning disabled can progess at normal academic rates. Further exploration of this academic growth rate is necessary in order to ascertain the interrelations between it and the original academic delays noted, between academic growth rate and grade placement, and between academic growth rate seen in Learning Center environments as compared to the growth rate which would be evidenced if learning deficient children were retained in regular classroom placement.

Table IX (p. 13) indicates children enrolled in the Learning Center performed significantly below their peers on tasks involved in the IOWA Tests of Basic Skills. This data is suggested to support diagnostic value of the Learning Center test battery. It also suggests that preliminary identification of children formally identified as evidencing Learning Disabilities can be accomplished by review of IOWA test scores.

Objective III

During the 1972-73 school year sixty percent of the 280 children enrolled in the Learning Centers will achieve to grade level and thus be returned to the regular classroom in one or more of the acacemic subjects for which the child was enrolled in the Learning Center.

Termination from Learning Center programming for the 1972-73 academic year is presented in Table X. (See Table X, p. 16)

A total of 138 children were enrolled in the four Affton Learning Centers during the 1972-73 academic year. Termination percentage based upon enrollment of 138 was 40.5%.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TABLE X

TERMINATION FIGURES
AFFTON LEARNING CENTERS

School	No. Students	Subject Area				Total
		Reading	Mathematics	Writing	Perception	
Goetsch	13	7	4	2	1	14
Hegge	8	6	1	1	0	8
Mesnier	8	4	4	0	6	14
Reavis	10	8	2	8	2	20
Total	39	25	11	11	9	56

SUMMARY

There has been much speculation as to the role of specialized programming for the children evidencing learning disabilities and the effect of specialized education placement. The data gathered in this report are useful accordingly. From these findings it appears that the relationship between specialized programming for learning disabled children and improvement in learning is positive. Further investigation is, however, necessary.

Four public elementary schools and parochial schools within the Affton School District participated in this project. Each school was prepared for the program through meetings with superintendent, Learning Center staff, principals, and school counselors. The project was met with enthusiasm and cooperation from those concerned. Data resulting from this investigation will be shared with these individuals and all other interested individuals. Continued programming for children evidencing learning differences is suggested to this District as a result of current program findings.

Submitted by:

Paul A. Onkle, Ph.D.
Superintendent
School District of Affton

Mary O. Dasovich, Ph.D.
Consultant, Supervisor